

## **Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC)**

The signing of the North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA) in 1993 created the world's largest trading bloc. At the same time, the NAFTA partners (Canada, Mexico, and the United States) sought to build environmental safeguards into the trade liberalization pact and signed the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation, creating the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC). The CEC Council has structured its work around three main themes: (1) Climate Change; (2) Green Growth; and (3) Sustainable Communities and Ecosystems. Crosscutting themes include: (a) Learning from and assisting vulnerable groups and indigenous communities; (b) Enhancing the alignment of environmental regulatory standards, enforcement and compliance; and (c) Enhancing information, transparency, capacity building and communication. Projects focus on the protection of the North American environment, and therefore trilateral environmental problems, issues and cooperation are given priority in funding.

From 2013-2015, CEC's Operational Plan funded a project on North America's Blue Carbon: Assessing the Role of Coastal Habitats in the Continent's Carbon Budget. This project advances the conservation and restoration of coastal blue carbon habitats by improving data, mapping and approaches necessary to develop and apply the appropriate carbon budgets. Adequately protected coastal ecosystems, including salt marshes, mangroves and seagrass beds offer carbon sequestration and long-term carbon storage. By contrast, when these coastal habitats are destroyed, they change from being net carbon sinks to net carbon emitters.

CEC is currently developing its 2015-2017 Operational Plan. The Blue Carbon project will be continued and expanded, and a project on marine protected areas has also been approved (Marine Protected Areas: Strengthening Management Effectiveness and Supporting Coastal Community Resilience). The project aims to support marine protected area networks, seascape-level Marine Park Partnerships, climate-smart adaptation and mitigation activities, and the integration of traditional knowledge and community-level awareness and engagement. It will work with the private sector, indigenous and local communities to better understand and ameliorate the ecological, social, cultural, and economic vulnerability of fisheries, traditional and nature-based activities within North American seascapes.

### **Headquarters**

Commission for Environmental Cooperation  
393, rue St-Jacques Ouest  
Bureau 200  
Montréal (Québec)  
H2Y 1N9 Canada  
Telephone: (514) 350-4300  
Fax: (514) 350-4314  
Email: [info@ccemtl.org](mailto:info@ccemtl.org)  
Web address: <http://www.cec.org/home/index.cfm?varlan=english>

**Staff Contacts:**

NOAA Office of International Affairs  
Herbert C. Hoover Building, Room A300  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20235  
Phone: (202) 482-6196  
Fax: (202) 482-6000; 482-4307  
Web address: <http://www.international.noaa.gov/index.htm>

Lauren Wenzel  
1305 East West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3281  
(301) 713-3165  
Fax: (301) 713-3110  
[Lauren.Wenzel@noaa.gov](mailto:Lauren.Wenzel@noaa.gov)

Ariana Sutton-Grier  
1305 East West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3281  
(301) 713-3074  
[Ariana.Sutton-Grier@noaa.gov](mailto:Ariana.Sutton-Grier@noaa.gov)

